

# THE CORRESPONDENT.

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MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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EDITED BY GEORGE HOUSTON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### WATSON REFUTED.

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#### LETTER VI.

You enter again upon your favorite topic, genuineness and authenticity. I shall not repeat what I have already said. I confess my great surprise at your laying such a stress upon the most trifling and false of your arguments. You now strive to prove, that the book may contain a true history, although it should be anonymous. Pray, my Lord, do you think, that to prove a book spurious, when it is believed to be genuine, is a demonstration of the truth of the contents? You thus leave us uncertain whether Joshua be a genuine book. You have sadly confused yourself in the maze you have created. To put it beyond a doubt that the sun stood still, you appeal to the book of Jasher, which Joshua mentions in the following words, "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" And in like manner you refer to other books frequently quoted as authorities in the bible. Does your zeal blind you so far as not to let you perceive, that this very argument may with redoubled strength be retorted against you? for if an author, who is said to write his own history, appeals to another book for a proof of his actions, that book must be of much greater authority than his own: we cannot avoid believing the writer of the work alluded to, had better information. In short, the book appealed to, contains the only authentic testimony. Now permit me to ask you, who could be better authority than Joshua himself, writing at a time when we must suppose many of his soldiers who had witnessed the miracle were alive? What is this anterior book which Joshua respects so much? Was it written by himself; then it would be idle to quote it; and if at any rate, whoever had written it, it is evident that the author of the book of Joshua has no proofs of his own, but rests solely upon the book of the holy, or of Jasher. This circumstance proves clearly, that the writer of the book of Joshua composed his book out of some more ancient memories, which being lost, we can say no more of their authority than for that of any other tales.

You talk of the public records of the Jews as confidently as a member of Parliament speaks of the papers in the Tower. Do you know at what period the Jews began to keep written records, and do you also know,

whether those that were kept existed when the books of the old Testament were compiled ? Had you been instructed in these particulars, and had you been not altogether divested of candour, you might have informed your readers, that, previous to the time of the kings, we have not a shadow of proof of the existence of any historical records among the Jews. We, no doubt, read, that there was a book of the law of Moses, in which Joshua wrote something too respecting the renewal of a covenant. This seems to be the only written record among the Jews, and it contained nothing but religious precepts, or the law, strictly speaking. In Joshua, chap. viii, ver. 31, we read, " As Moses the servant of the lord commanded the children of Israel, and as it is written in the book of the law of Moses ;" and verse 32, " He wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel ;" and verse 35, " He read all the words of the law, the blessings, and curses, according to all that is written in the book of the law of the lord, and there was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before the congregation of of Israel." We know, likewise, that this law was written in the circumference of an altar composed of twelve stones. This is the only book either Moses or Joshua were ever said to have written ; the writers of the Pentateuch, and of the other books, certainly never meant to ascribe them to Moses, Joshua, &c.; they bore the names of books of Moses, Joshua, Judges &c., because they treated of these personages. What then do you infer from the quotation of books by the bible authors, except that they all wrote in very modern times, when they wanted the corroboration of more ancient books, whose date and authority we are equally strangers to ? This book of the law, which you so triumphantly mention as a book written and existing a few years after Moses, turns out to be nothing more than what is contained in Exodus, chap. xx. to chap. xxiv. to which Joshua added some detail about the third covenant of God.

I beg the reader will observe, that the writer of the book of Joshua does not mention the second, third, or any other book of Moses, but simply notices the book of the law of God. Now this great book was written upon twelve stones, and in Exodus we find the precise commandment of Moses to build the altar, and to read the commandments at the feast of Tabernacles ; so that it contained not one line of history, and could have no authority. It was a law written upon stones, which Moses, in Exodus, chap. xxiv. v. 7, is said to have read to the people :— " And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people." This covenant, and particularly the repetition of it after the disobedience of the Jews, is the only part of the scriptures that Moses ordered to be preserved with a religious care. Nothing of the most important parts of Genesis, or the other five books is ever mentioned in the commandments of the law of God : the writer of the law certainly knew not that the Pentateuch existed. Had Moses written such a work, would he have failed to recommend to the Levites to keep the precious records of mankind, the sublime account of the creation ? Did not the whole of the faith of the Jews depend on their being acquainted with the history of their forefathers, who were under the immediate protection of

God ? The ten commandments every person knows from the light of nature ; no nation has ever mistaken them ; but the origin of mankind is a subject of great darkness, and which the Jews ought to have preserved most carefully. Certain, however, it is, that excepting a few rites, the Jews lost not only their books, but even the recollection of their feasts, during their captivity. The other books referred to in the bible prove that those left are mere recollections of borrowed stories, and pretended abridgements of books of greater authority, which are unfortunately lost, and leave a wide field for scepticism, particularly upon improbable or contradictory accounts. As to the belief that the books of the old Testament are inspired, it is a tale, which, after what we have stated, even a child would laugh at.

You next seriously endeavor to corroborate the ridiculous miracle of the sun and moon standing still. You are as unsuccessful in historical as in scientifical arguments. The story in question is so stupid, that the bare mention of it marks a man's credulity, so as to render him the object of compassion. That an ignorant fanatic should attempt to defend such absurdities, would be a matter of no surprise ; but to witness a Regius Professor of Divinity, a natural philosopher, bring forward facts from profane history to prove the truth of so bare-faced a lie, denotes at least your want of prudence. I cannot persuade myself that you seriously believed what you wrote ; I cannot think you capable of falling at once into the most gross astronomical and historical error. I shall state the matter briefly. There was a tradition in all antiquity, and particularly among the Egyptians, relating to that motion of the earth's axis which has been observed by astronomers, and whose complete revolution round the four cardinal points take up no less than 2,160,000 years. In the course of this revolution, it necessarily happens, that the sun will rise where it sets, that north will be south, and so on. The Egyptian priests pretended that this revolution had taken place in their country without changing the climate, while the Babylonians maintained, in the time of Alexander, that 140,000 years had elapsed since their first astronomical observations. This, no doubt, was the time that must have elapsed since the earth moved north and south. The Egyptian priests, long before Herodotus, had lost their knowledge of astronomy, which accounts for their mistake. It is evident, that the displacement of the earth's axis must be accompanied by the heaviest gravitating matter, and therefore, what is now land, has been and will, in the course of ages, become sea. Now, my Lord, what has the Egyptian tradition to do with the sun stopped by the robber Joshua ? What connection has the stoppage of the sun, or rather the earth's motion, with the sun rising where it sets ? Were the thing possible, the sun would nevertheless rise in the east. Besides, does Joshua say the sun changed in its course ? Had this been the case, (I am ashamed even of the supposition), how could the earth change its axis in an hour, without shattering the whole globe, without inundating vast tracts of country, and tearing others asunder to re-establish the equilibrium of gravity ? Study and consider ; do not attempt to ridicule the little learning of Thomas Paine, when you fall into such absurdities. Read Chinese history, and you will find that their careful astronomers did not perceive the long day and night. It was probable the sun of Ju-

dea only that altered its course ; they did not seem to be enlightened by the same luminary. Those who believed that heaven was made of crystal, could find no difficulty in crediting this silly story. I have insisted so much upon this, because you ought to know the common principles of astronomy, and somewhat of history.

Here again you appeal to the book of Jasher : it deserves no more consideration. To deem an appeal to a lost book evidence of a prodigy, because the author affirms it, is a degree of credulity which may gain the kingdom of heaven ; but, in the republic of letters, such believer will pass for a very contemptible reasoner. These are the miracles, and the histories, better attested than the History of the Twelve Knights of Charles the Great, and such other foolish tales. Surely, none can believe that 12,000 men fought against the Midianites, and murdered a prodigious number, without having lost a man, and disbelieve the famous battles of the knights, in many of which six men fought several thousands ; the conversation of the devil with Cromwell, or the miraculous appearance of God to almost all the knights and warriors among the Catholics. The sacred phial of Rheims, and the chapel of Loretto, were both conveyed in a manner you know well, and which few men in the two countries dare controvert. They too appeal to their books of Jasher. The tale of making the sun stand still, has not even the merit of novelty ; this luminary had long before stopt his career, out of respect to Bacchus. Neither is the shower of hail-stones new, for Jupiter of old sent a shower of hail upon the rebellious sons of Neptune.

As to Joshua having written the book that goes under his name, we have, besides what has been stated, the strongest evidence against the genuineness of this performance. The death of Joshua is recorded in chap. xxiv. and it is related exactly in the same style as what precedes it. The writer even mentions several events posterior to the death of the son of Nun. You have passed over the arguments of Thomas Paine drawn from this passage, "The Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day." It was natural for you to overlook a passage, which demonstrates that the book of Joshua was not written until after David, when, and not before, the conquest of the Jebusites took place. It is beyond a doubt, that they never dwelt with the Jews in the time of Joshua, since, in the first part of the above quoted passage, he says, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out." How then did the Jews inhabit Jerusalem in the days of Joshua ? I refer the reader to the Age of Reason, and to an answer to it by Mr. David Wilson, for further information on this head. In the latter, he will be amazed at the weak subterfuges used by the author to evade the strength of the objection by Mr. Paine. But this is not the only event related in Joshua, which did not take place till some time after his death. Almost the whole of chap. xvii. contains facts of this nature. Where the portion of Mannesseh is described, it is said, in ver. 12, "Yet the children of Mannesseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the inhabitants would dwell in that land." It is added, "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel waxed strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute ; but did not utterly drive them out." Now this certainly did not take place during the life of Josh-

ua, for in the very same chapter, he promises those of the tribe of Manasseh success against the Canaanites. In the preceding chapter, v. 10, there is a passage of the same kind, " And they (the Ephraimites) drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt among the Ephraimites unto this day, and some under tribute." This needs no comment : let any person ask himself when this came to pass, and they will at once find out the credit due to books containing such shameful anachronisms and falsehoods. In chapter first of Judges, purporting to contain the history of the Jews after Joshua, the reader will find a faithful copy of the passages quoted, not excepting the taking of Jerusalem. Let him compare ver. 8, 27, 28, 29, and following, with the detail of the distribution of lots to the tribes, in chap. xvi. and xvii. of Joshua the same events are told in the very words, and apply to two different periods. This is a strong instance of the disorder that pervades the whole of these books, and how undeserving of credit, even in the most probable events, is what you call sacred writ. We are constantly reading over accounts of the same events, sometimes said to be written by dead men, and never marking time ; for *it came to pass*, which is the Bible phrase, does not fix the period when the event took place. These books bear all the marks of being the productions of some persons at a very late period, and to have suffered great interpolations. Joshua is, in the face of it, a continuation of Deuteronomy, Judges of Joshua, and so on through the remainder.

See p. 198

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**NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1828.**

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PROGRESS OF LIBERAL OPINIONS IN ENGLAND.

We have been favored, by a gentleman lately arrived from England, with the first volume of the new weekly publication by Mr. Carlyle, entitled "*The Lion*," by which, we rejoice to learn that the cause of truth, notwithstanding the late persecution and imprisonment of Mr. Robert Taylor, is advancing with a rapidity unexampled in any former part of the history of Great Britain. The renewed attempt of bigotry and fanaticism to arrest the progress of enquiry, has only served to give an additional impulse to those immediately engaged in attacking popular errors, and to lead the attention of thousands, who were formerly indifferent as to theological and philosophical subjects, to a calm investigation of their principles.

Since Mr. Taylor was committed to Oakham jail, he has written a work entitled "*Syntagma, or the Evidences of the Christian Religion*," which has been published separately by Mr. Carlyle. Mr. T. had, also, from February to June last, addressed no less than twenty letters to Mr. Carlyle, all of which appear in the numbers of *The Lion*; and are replete with valuable information, lucid argument, and incontrovertable reasoning. Nor has Mr. Carlyle himself been idle, or even inactive. On being released from his six years imprisonment, he almost immediately set out on a tour through the most populous parts of England, where he delivered public lectures, in which he fearlessly assailed the prevailing

superstition, and challenged its interested supporters to stand forth in its defence. Wherever he went, he had the pleasure of being listened to by crowded audiences ; and although he was met, on a few occasions, by the superstitionists, the discussion uniformly terminated in the complete defeat of his antagonists. Mr. Carlyle had also opened a *Sunday School* in London, under his own immediate inspection, which was well attended, and promised to be productive of the most beneficial consequences.

We have been so much gratified with perusing "*The Lion*," that we have this week transferred a considerable portion of its contents to our pages, in the anticipation that the articles we republish will be equally gratifying to our readers.

*From the Lion of May 9th, 1828.*

#### CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The present has been a busy week for the sons of old mother church, who are in town. We have had the Bishop of Winchester creating a disturbance in Fleet-street, by coming to preach a sermon on Monday evening, at St. Bride's Church. On Tuesday at the Freemason's Tavern there was a meeting of the Church Missionary Society, at which the Senior Wilberforce, the black christian manufacturer, the Bishop of Winchester and several other Bishops were present. The Bishop of Sodor and Man is reported to have said, that the church had more stability in such societies as that, than in any junction it could make with the state. There will be a speedy divorce between church and state.—The state now wants a variety of religious wives, and old mother church, like all other old women, will become a cast-off. The last wedding of the state will be with infidelity, and then away will go all the religious wives ; or, if we may be at liberty to use a protestant figure, this family of harlots, the Church of Rome, being the mother of them all, and by themselves declared to be "the mother of harlots," will be barren and finally extinct.

By the statement of the members, it appears, that the church sends out seventeen missionaries to the Hindoos and Africans ; but not one can it find to send among the infidels at home. How is this ? Is not the saving of a white soul at home, as good as that of a black soul abroad ? And why not send missionaries to the monkeys of South America ? Who is to say to what grade of animals the soul extends ? or where the human species ends, or that of the monkey begins ? Some beings, called human, are lower in character than a portion of the beings called monkeys. When we look into the miserable faces of some of our neighbours, we could burst into laughter or indignation, according to the mood of the body, at the idea of their immortal souls. We see an old woman, now and then, saturated with snuff and gin, and ponder over the figure or character that her immortal soul will make ; when, most heartily, do we desire to keep out of the heaven that such wretches will reach. We see men swallowing, to the destruction of their health, a quantity of filthy and unwholesome liquor, with a tobacco-pipe constantly in their mouth, for the purpose of a due stenching of their bodies, and most filthily stuffing their nostrils with snuff ; and this too, with very high religious pre-

tentions ; but there can be no heaven for us, if it be not free from such nuisances as these. Had we absolute power over them, we would teach some of these filthy christians how to begin their heaven upon earth. They have more need of a bath, and a dose of salts to cleanse their bodies, than of a sermon, or a missionary, to cleanse and purify their souls. In short, when we compare the pretensions with the real character of mankind, we do perceive them to be the most odious and most unnatural animals on the face of the earth.

The missionary passion of converting all sorts of animals to christianity, is as absurd in its character as the system of christianity itself is to philosophic ken. But from an absurd system, what but absurdity can proceed ? Many a thousand pound is yearly sent out of this country on this missionary project, whilst many thousand persons at home are in as great a state of barbarity and ignorance, as the heathen sought elsewhere. Three fourths of the people of Ireland, and one fourth of the people of England, Wales, and Scotland, are scarcely a grade higher in knowledge, than the cattle among which they work. Now, where is there a more miserable laboring class than at home, and yet our bishops act as if there were nothing to do at home, as if christianity were perfect here, and as if all that was necessary was to send that salvation abroad which is overflowing at home ! Strange infatuation ! and more strange that there should be simpletons to support it with their purses.

The first necessary institutions for mankind, are those for the improvement and salvation of their bodies. Take care of the bodies, and we will warrant that each well instructed body will take care of its own soul ; but to talk to miserable people about a care for their souls, when no care is afforded to their bodies, is as great an outrage as can be offered to sensation. Let us find the means to improve the bodies of our own neighbors, to free them from disease, to keep them clean and well clothed ; to house them well ; to let them cultivate all the land that can be made productive ; to teach them to read, to write, to think correctly, let us endeavor to remove that frightful pauperism that now pervades the empire of George the Fourth, and let us not say another word about souls, until the bodies are saved, and worthy of life.

To teach man that his body is a sink of iniquity, and his soul an immortal gem that may be purified to everlasting happiness, is to do what hath been done by christianity—to debase him to a degree lower than any other animal. The living body is the all in all of man ; the only possession that he has to improve, and if the tax upon his labour that is wasted upon his nonentity of a soul were expended upon the real entity of his body, he would be a very superior being to that which he now is.

On Wednesday, a meeting of the Foreign Bible Society took place at the Freemason's Tavern. There were present nearly the same persons as attended the Church Missionary Society. It was stated, that the Society had circulated five millions of bibles. What an enormous waste of paper, ink, and human labour ! And knowing well the character and tendency of the bible, we undertake to say, that these five million bibles have not improved the moral character or social condition of one human being. The bible is every where in Great Britain and Ireland ; every person can read it, who may wish to read it; it is very extensively read ;

and what is the real character of these bible-readers ? As immoral, as odious ; as offensive to the well informed mind, to the mind that soars above bible-reading, as human nature in its most depraved form can present itself. The very Bishops themselves ; they who thrive so richly on this circulation of the bible, are in every relation to truth, honesty, and morality, a most despicable class of beings. The bible may make men of their own class, men who have no love of truth, and who are filled with trick and imposition ; but it never yet improved the moral character of one human being that might not have been similarly improved by other books and other means. It is a monstrous imposition upon mankind to say that this book, the bible, is essential to their moral and physical welfare here, and their spiritual welfare hereafter. It has no effect whatever upon them, other than to cheat and rob them here, of which there can be no account taken hereafter. We will stake the good effect of this declaration upon mankind against all the bibles that the bible society can circulate ; and we pronounce these right reverend managers of these bible societies to be a set of depraved jugglers ; and though they do not appear to see it, we would hint to them, that to circulate the bible, is, after all, but to expose their craft ; and if it have any effect at all, this is its only effect ; so God speed their own destruction.

One thing is certain, however the cause of the bible may prosper among the red, brown, and black savage animals abroad, it decays among the dirty white-brown ones at home ; and if this distribution and teaching of the bible be a charity, like other charities it should begin at home. Let the experiment be first made at home ; let every human being born at home, be allowed to read the bible and all the commentaries that have been made upon it, and if then it be found to improve his or her condition beyond the point at which it may be improved by any other reading ; then, in the name of all that is good to man, let it be extended to every human being on the face of the earth. But a knowledge of the bible has not yet been allowed a fair trial at home.

#### THE PROGRESS OF SECTARIANISM.

There seems to be no end to the follies of Sectarianism, deducible from the books which are *par excellence*, called the *Sacred Scriptures* ; but which have no other claim to that description than that the word *sacred* must comprise, in expression and excellence, all that is historically false and contradictory, and all that is physical and morally mysterious. We have already seen these Sacred Scriptures produce Deists, Universalists, with and without damnation, Unitarians, Free-thinking Christians and Quakers, who have no public prayers. Trinitarians, multitudinously various ; and now, LO ! THE SECT OF CHRISTIAN DIA-BOLISTS, OR DEVIL WORSHIPPERS ! We wonder that such a sect has not arisen before, considering the powerful character of the Devil, as one of the Christian Deities ; and as the manuscript of their Liturgy has come in our way, as free and universal printers, we have been led to admire the consistent and respectful superiority of this class of Christians over every other sect that has made its appearance in pub-

lic. This Christian Diabolism is really superior to Elijah Dixon's Christian Universalism, superior to that Christian sophism of the Bible-Christs at Manchester, and very far superior to the mongrel and misnamed Universalism of the Reverend Joseph Fitch, in Grub street. We do not perceive any thing bordering upon jest in the whole Liturgy. The proper respect, christianly speaking, is paid to each of the Christian Deities. And however far the title of the sect and the Liturgy may appear, on first impressions, to wear, from its novelty, the appearances of jest, we can assure those serious Christians, who may be pleased to read the Liturgy, when printed, that it is throughout, serious and founded upon the most respectable, because the most true, Christian principles. The following are the title and preface of the Reverend Robert Wedderburn's Liturgy :

#### THE TITLE.

" **THE HOLY LITURGY, or DIVINE SERVICE,** upon the principles of **PURE CHRISTIAN DIABOLISM**, most strictly founded upon the Sacred Scriptures and the most approved tenets of the Grecian, Roman, German, Genevan, and English Churches, being an Universal and proper form of prayer for all Christians, excepting those only, who impiously reject the Scriptural doctrine of the personal existence of the **DEVIL**; prepared for the use of the congregation which assembles under the pastorsehip of the **REVEREND ROBERT WEDDERBURN**. By SPECIAL COMMAND. London, Printed at the University Press, by, &c. *Cum. Privilegio.*

#### THE PREFACE.

" Startle not, gentle Christian reader, at the name of **DIABOLICAL CHRISTIANS**; but carefully, as thou valuest thine Eternal Salvation, examine the Scriptural principle of this new sect, and say, if they are not justified, by all that is held sacred, in Christian Revelation, and by the most seriously disposed Christians. It is not a profane hand, it is not the hand of the reviler, that passeth over this page: but the hand of a most sincere Christian. He might not be of thy sect; but, for his dissent from thee, he is not the less a Christian. He hath most studiously deduced, from the Sacred Scriptures and from the little less Sacred Writings of the most holy men of the general Christian Church, the best and most consistent Christian tenets that he can find, agreeably to his own disinterested judgment or agreeably to that judgment which is deeply interested in the present and future happiness of self and all mankind.

" The **DIABOLICAL CHRISTIANS** hold the doctrine, that the **ALMIGHTY GOD** is so full of power and Goodness—power to supply all our wants, and goodness to dispose him so to supply them—that they cannot perceive the propriety of addressing troublesome, complaining, and ill-judged prayers to a divine Being, who is alike omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. To offer this Deity a prayer is, at least, to doubt his goodness and his attention toward us. To presume, that the **MAJESTY OF HEAVEN** can be offended at our ignorance and our general imperfections, is, to presume, in derogation from his omniscience and general perfections. Far be this fail-

ing, this presumption, from us, who associate in public worship, upon the principles of PURE CHRISTIAN DIABOLISM.

"OUR PRAYERS SHALL BE ALL MOST PROPERLY ADDRESSED TO THE MAJESTY OF HELL, to that "GOD OF THIS WORLD," to that IMPERFECT, that *Omnimalevolent*, though *Powerful Being*, THE DEVIL. This it is, that will justify our assumed appellation of CHRISTIAN DIABOLISM.

"We feel our justification, in the circumstance, that the GOD OF HEAVEN is so much above our imperfections, as to be a Being not to be feared; while the GOD OF HELL and "OF THIS WORLD," partakes in part of our character and imperfections, and is, consequently, from his power superior to ours, *Being to be feared, to be worshipped, to be cajoled with prayer*; and it may be, that the MAJESTY OF HEAVEN will make us weak mortals instrumental in the conversion of the MAJESTY OF HELL, from the errors of his ways; that conversion and restoration having been divinely predicted, as the necessary preliminary to the consummation of all earthly things!

"We have said enough, in the plainness and simplicity of our hearts, as a preface, to our form of prayer; and, with the strong hope of doing good, of bringing about "*glory to God and peace and good will among men,*" we leave each Christian reader to form an opinion of its merits. Our congregation will be open; we shall shrink from no examination, and we invite full observation, before any one presume to judge and condemn us."

#### THE SOUTHCOETEAN'S.

Mr. Carlile, in the account of his tour through England, gives the following particulars of the sect, which has arisen there from the reveries of that old ignorant woman, Johanna Southcote, who about twelve years ago gave out, (and the story was believed by sixty thousand people pretending to common sense) that she had been impregnated by the Holy Ghost, and was about to reconvey the *Shiloh* into the world!—Even the death of this fanatical woman, and the discovery that her pregnancy was only a dropsy in the chest, has not, it appears, been sufficient to convince the credulous of the falsehood of her pretensions, and of the egregious folly of all superstitions.

While at Ashton-under-line, (says Mr. Carlile) I went twice and joined the congregation of Israelites in their chapel. This sect is that of the late Johanna Southcote, with the assumed name of Israelites. The members conform to the Mosaic law: the males wear their beards, and submit to circumcision. The females dress in a very neat way, in some measure following the fashion of the day as the shape of the bonnet, dress, &c.; but they who can afford it wear a white veil, in which some words or Hebrew characters, or some thing or sign, which I could not distinguish, or be informed of, is worked so as to fall just before the eyes. The men generally wear white hats and a blue coat, with white large metal buttons; no collar, and the old fashioned single-breasted cut, tapering from the waist to the bottom like that of the Quakers. They are polite to strangers, court their visits to the chapel, and there appears to

be much good feeling among them, providing for, also like the Quakers, their own poor.

The chapel was small, but a new and neat one, the fronts and sides of the pews being made of the best mahogany. The most striking affair in the chapel, on ordinary sundays is the chorus of music. I counted twenty-one pieces of wind instruments, and some of those of the most boisterous kind ; indeed, I know not one of the wind instruments commonly used in military bands that was not there. The noise was great, and nothing but the drums and cymbals were wanting to make it complete. What was thus deficient, was lustily atoned for by the lungs of the Israelites, some of them blowing almost to bursting, evidently giving vent, by this means, to a sort of religious enthusiasm or fury. The singing of the women was pretty, during the intervals of the lower notes of the music, or the cessation of the wind instruments ; but the voice was drowned, when the instruments were in full play. This seemed to fulfil the Gospel precept of taking heaven by storm, for heaven must be a very great way off if the inhabitants could not hear and join chorus with the Israelites of Ashton-under-line. A female in the gallery, read some of the lessons of the day ; and one, too, who, whatever might be her scholastic attainments for the task, has no voice equal to it. There was no sermon in the morning ; but prayer, singing, and scripture reading. The ordinary talent which is found among other sects was evidently lacking in the two persons whom I that day saw and heard in the pulpit.

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#### EXTENTION OF KNOWLEDGE.

In announcing his intention of publishing his work on the origin of Christianity, Mr. Taylor thus expresses himself, in a letter to Mr. Carlyle :—

" There is room for a good chronological work, in display of the gradual developement of mental energies, and the now every day visibly extending spread of knowledge. I catch even the *Times* Newspaper sporting in a licence of expression, and more than hinted contempt of the religion by law established, that would, fifty years ago, have unquestionably brought its editor to the pilory. Even in this little town of Oakham, the number of church-goers is not a quarter what it was recollect to have been a dozen years ago. All the new church-building, bible-giving, religious tract-circulating, and a hundred fold multiplied zeal, vigilance, and merit (in their way) of the clergy, is found abortive, or productive of a directly contrary effect to that intended. Infidelity extends ; it spreads in every direction, and gains strength by every means, fair or foul, that has been used against it. Scarcely a boy who has reached his teens, and not a man independent mind, or wholly disconnected from the immediate interests of the craft itself, is to be found, but either is a sceptic, or but a sorry christian. When churches were much fewer—when bibles were less circulated—when the clergy generally, were chargeable with lukewarmness and neglect of duty ; nay, when it was no unusual thing that the minister of the parish should be the most immoral and wicked man in it, all went on smoothly, and the devil was

kept at bay ; but now, when an immoral or irregularly conducted clergyman, or one, in the least degree, inattentive to his ministerial duties, is rarely, I believe, on my honor, no where to be found ; now when religious knowledge has outmarched her progress for ages, infidelity has got a thousand times the start of her, and it will not be, (depend upon it, it will not be) long, ere the contest will be given up. Honesty will come into good esteem, and cheat will be acknowledged and forgiven, and christianity and all its mischievous absurdities,

" Shall live but in the memory of Time,  
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start,  
Look back, and shudder at his younger years."—QUEEN MAB.

" If the curious question were proposed—" Where in this era of the world ; is the *Summa Potestas*, the really commanding, effecting, and greatest power on earth ?" [That somewhere there must be such a power, is as evident as that there is power in existence]—It is neither in the king, the lady, the doctor, nor the Jew ; and I thank God, most and above all, it is *not* it the aristocracy ; but it is in the *Press* !!! My life's experience and every day's observance confirms my conviction of the *Moral Deity* of that Almighty and Everlasting Palladium of all that makes existence desirable—of all that gives rationality and virtue to man. I have but to call to mind the services that it has done me ; how it has protected my honor, my life, my health,—been terrible only to my follies ; but ever comfortable to my sorrows, redressing my complaints, encouraging my exertions, and rewarding my ambition. This, indeed, is the great sympathetic nerve, that runs through the moral body,—" Source inexhaustible of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows :" when I should have been destitute, it forestalled my necessity ; when I was in prison it ministered unto me. It hath redeemed my reputation from the power of the persecutor, and my life from the malice of the tyrant. Can I want an *inconceivable or incomprehensible* cause, towards which to effund the overflowing sentiments of a grateful heart, when I can *lay my hand*, and *feel*, and *see*, and *know* the immediate instrument by which I have friends, have food and raiment, have life, and all that gives life sweetness. When I had been fraudulently inveigled into the responsibilities of a debt, which I never contracted ; and, by persecuting and inexorable Quakers, was made to pay in suffering—the claim I could not satisfy in any other way ; this Almighty Protector of the innocent took up my wrongs, and conquered the world's conviction that I was as far from being a debtor as I am from being a criminal. When I had been cast into a damp pestiferous dungeon, ere the fifth day had seen my health endangered, the Guardian Deity spoke in thunder to the mind of the tyrant. The " *Mene tekel upharsin*" of a single sentence, written by the unseen hand, within an hour of its publication, unlocked the door, and made the oppressor regret that it had ever been shut upon me. To what do I owe it, here, [in prison] that I get civil treatment, that oppression dares not have its pleasure on me.

" I hail with rapture, an advertisement which I see in the *Times Supplement*, of the 17th, of Fitzroy Chapel, situate in London Street, Fitz-

roy Square, to be sold at the Mart, May 19th, 1828, of which the annual rent has until lately exceeded 1500*l.* ! What has caused the falling off of that rent " lately" down from 1500*l.* to *shut up shop*? It is the increase of infidelity, the diffusion of inquiry and intelligence. Awakening reason asks for an answer to her conscientious inquiries, and neither railing at unbelievers, nor sending them to Oakham, will supply the place of one. Here, in fact, is the secret of the greater apparent religious zeal of the Dissenters, and the cause why a dissenterian Lord Mayor, and a canting fanatic of an Alderman, were the first to march to the crusade against the *Areopagus*.

" Their revenues, they know, hang by their frailer tenure. As men recover their mental sanity, the first part of the extravagance which they will correct, will be that which costs them what there is nothing to enforce them to pay. When the support of the minister depends solely on the voluntary subscriptions of his hearers, he has every thing at stake to keep them in the vein for subscribing : the enthusiasm must be kept to its full heat ; the fervour must glow ; the madness must rage ; for, if once the patient begins to respire freely, the spiritual Physician knows that his fees are in danger. And, though the march of scepticism is not so rapid as at once to wean men from their wonted haunts, and visibly thin their congregations, yet they feel an astonishing cold wind blow in upon them on collection days. To be sure, they have *preached* against infidelity ; they have *persecuted* it ; they have *railed* against it ; they have *prayed* against it ; they have *warned* their congregations against its seductive and insidious sophistries, and endeavoured to inspire their hearers with the intense feelings of animosity and malice against infidels, that glow in their own bosoms. But alas! it won't do ! it doesn't pay ! it defeats its own purpose ! and all they get from their now tainted flocks—is a deep sigh for the hardness of the times, and a sarcastic hint, that if their ministers had a mind to give a proof of their sincerity, they should let 'em have gospel cheaper!"

 We shall continue our extracts from the "The Lion" in our next.

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[FROM THE WESTERN RECORDER.]

*Blasphemous Tracts.*—Four " Liberal Tracts," as they are called, have been handed us, as specimens of the first emissions from an infidel press ; and sad specimens they are—filled with falsehoods and blasphemy. There is some small variety of character in them ; but they are all full of the grossest infidelity, and some of them contain expressions which must be shocking and abhorrent, to every one whose conscience is not " seared as with a hot iron." If the book of God is true, there are, and will be, persons given up to believe a lie, to their own destruction. The number of these will doubtless be increased by the dissemination of such publications ; and their blood will of course be found in the skirts of publishers and distributors.

The tracts are issued by an infidel society in New-York ; and we understand that an auxiliary society has been formed in this place. Every decent man, and every good citizen, to say nothing of religion, will look upon the doings of such a society as a public outrage. Every man who belongs to it should be distinctly marked as a foe to his country, and we will add, an enemy both to God and man.

The paper from which the above is extracted, is printed at Utica, and purports to be " published under the patronage, and for the benefit of the

Western Education Society and Auburn Theological Seminary!!" Had the word *theological* not appeared in this announcement, we should have been at a loss to account for the furor that dictated the remarks, consigning us to "destruction," and denouncing every member of the *Free Press Association* "as a foe to his country," for being concerned in issuing the "Liberal Tracts." A paper professing to be the organ of an "Education Society," if this education embraced topics really *useful* to man, would certainly have refrained from resorting to language which is never employed but to support a bad cause. When it is made use of, as in this instance; when they resort to invective, instead of showing by calm reasoning, that our Tracts are pernicious, they at once acknowledge the weakness of their cause; that the system, which their "Seminary" has been established to promulgate, is unfounded; and that its teachers or managers, aware of their utter inability to refute our arguments, have no other means left to prevent the entire rout of their phantoms and chimeras, than calumny and abuse.

Were it otherwise, why do not these *theologians*, who have devoted so many years to study, and who are so well paid, bring into action the whole artillery of their superior knowledge, and thus overwhelm the "infidels" at once? By adopting this course, they would get rid of an annoyance which is every where gaining upon them, and threatens the entire extinction of their order.—But, no,—they are paralized—they can use any other weapons but arguments—Like the desperado, they have no other alternative but to call down curses on the heads of those who have exposed their deceptions, and whom they unjustly accuse of meditating the destruction of human happiness.

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*Home Prospects.* The accounts we are receiving from Mr. Offen, who, as our readers already know, is now on a tour in the Northern and Western parts of this state, for the purpose of diffusing liberal principles, are of the most cheering nature. Every where he is received by the friends of truth with kindness, and good feeling—and the utmost facilities are given to promote his views.—Wherever an opportunity offers, he delivers lectures publicly, which are numerously and respectably attended by both sexes, from whom he uniformly receives an invitation to pay them another visit on his return to New-York. At Hudson, he says, in one of his letters, "I was to have had the large court house; but the Supreme Court was sitting—I am to have it on my return—and I am to send them three or four days notice, and they expect it to be filled. Last night I delivered an address in a large room at a tavern. It occupied me an hour and a half. The place was crowded; many ladies attended. The town being full, a number of gentlemen were present; and counsellors, who were not occupied in court, came. One, in particular, well known at the New-York bar, was in the room. It was as silent as death; not one left till I had done. A Universalist preacher told a friend that it was one of the most satisfactory, and best lectures he had ever heard. It was "On the free exercise of our reason on all subjects interesting to the human race"—On leaving the room, another gentleman observed—"It is such lectures we want in every town in the United States."

We have all along been deeply impressed with the advantages that

would result to the cause by a course similar to that now pursuing by Mr. Offen. There is a spirit of enquiry abroad, which cannot be satisfied but by conveying information to the far sides of those who are anxious to receive it. The interested propagators of error, well aware of the vast importance of this course, are not slow in this way to attempt the subjugation of the human mind to their interminable domination. With truth on our side, and having solely in view the moral improvement of our species, it was natural to anticipate the happiest results from the contemplated project ; and now that it has been resorted to, and, so far, promises ultimate success, we confidently hope it will continue to meet the cordial and efficient support of every one desirous of promoting mental improvement.

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### MISCELLANEOUS.

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#### CONFLAGRATION OF THE WORLD.

The late report of the dissolution of the world, had its origin in the appearance of the sun at present, having some spots upon its disk. These spots, it was stated by an Italian astronomer, announced the speedy extinction of this luminary, and consequently the end of the world. The man has been imprisoned as an alarmist ; but his foolish prediction has spread in both hemispheres, and been attended with some consequences.

In the 17th century the astronomers considered the spots on the sun as the commencement of that great conflagration on which they supposed to be the cause of the luminous state of the sun. In the 18th century an opinion was maintained by Le Hire that those spots were large lakes which would drown the sun. But the supposition that the sun was an igneous body is now generally abandoned. And an hypothesis more conformable to the majesty of nature, as well as all modern observations, considers the sun only as the centre towards which gravitates from all parts the luminous fluid, and perhaps the caloric spread throughout space. Like the plate of glass in the electrical apparatus, the sun by its rapid movement round its axis, puts in vibration the two fluids we have just named. Accumulated on the surface of the sun, these form a splendid atmosphere which deprives us of the sight of his dense and opaque nucleus. The movements of these luminous bodies however, suffer us sometimes to have an imperfect view of some parts of the sun, and these parts form, what are called spots. Such is the opinion of Herschell and others. These spots, therefore, do not prove an exhaustion either of light or heat. Besides, history shews that they have no constant influence upon the temperature of our planet. We have seen cold and wet years in which the sun had few spots—we have seen also hot years when the sun has been covered with them. These phenomena have never been followed by any sensible and durable revolution in our atmosphere. It is only since the invention of telescopes that the spots have been carefully observed. An Englishman, and Scheener and Fabricus, the Germans were the first who made regular observations in 1610 and 1611. Galileo studied them in 1612, and there were then more than 50 spots, and from their apparent movement the rotary motion of the sun was conclu-

ded. In 1674, a small spot was seen, which in a few days became twice as large and as dark as it was at first. A great number were seen in 1681. Few have been for a longer time than in 1676—they were seen for 70 days. In 1695 and 1792, they were seen in the same place. Cassini speaks of one seen in 1763, and designates it as the largest and blackest he had ever seen. It was three times as large as the whole earth. From 1744 to 1778, he says, he does not recollect to have seen the sun without spots, and in great number. In 1718 and 1719, the sun was covered with spots, and yet the heat was extraordinary. It would be useless to accumulate more facts to shew that the spots on the sun ought not to create any uneasiness.

*Free Press Tract Fund.*—Although the advocates of liberal principles are opposed to those Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies, which have been established in this and other countries, the principle on which these Societies proceed cannot but receive their approbation. It, in fact, originated with the friends of civil and religious liberty in Europe, and would, long ere this, have overthrown political as well as spiritual tyranny, had not measures been adopted to restrain the dissemination of all writings calculated to dispel the mists of ignorance.

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*Free Press Association.*—The regular monthly meeting of the Association will be held in the *Temple of Science*, (formerly the Bethel Academy) Elizabeth-Street, between Houston and Bleecker-streets, on Sunday, (to-morrow) October 5th, at half past 10 o'clock, A. M.

In the afternoon, a THEOLOGICAL lecture will be delivered at 4 o'clock.

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MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

MR. HOUSTON,—I observed some time ago a controversy in the Correspondent, turning on the fact that an ancient author, Philo Judæus, who was cotemporary with Jesus Christ, and who writes on the affairs of the Jews during the period when Christ was supposed to have lived, makes no mention of Christ, Christians, or Christianity. Some parson or other, with the usual effrontery and ignorance of that class of men, denied that Philo, the Jew, referred to by “A Lover of Truth,” was the author commonly known amongst the learned by the appellation of Philo Judæus.

I have now before me a folio volume printed at Paris 1552, at the press of Adrian Turneby, entitled ΦΙΛΩΝΟΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΥ εἰς τα τα ΜΩΣΕΩΣ &c. Philonis Judæus in Libros Mosis.

De mundi Opificio.

Historicos.

De Legibus.

Ejusdem libri singulares.

In the chapter περὶ τοῦ πατα σπουδαιον ειναι ελευθερον, in which he mentions the Essei (page 600) who were the contemplative and philosophical class amongst the Jews, he makes no mention of Christ, or Christians, or Christianity, although that liar and forger Eusebius, in his preface, considers them as Christians.

Philo Judæus (pages 668, 669, and 698 to 698) speaks of the state of the Jews and their afflictions under Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius; the very period embracing the whole extent of Christ's life; but not a word of Christ. Let the clergy explain this if they can. Philo Judæus was a learned man, and a public functionary (Agent for the Jews) at the time.

By the way, the oft-cited passage about the Christians in Pliny, the younger, is universally rejected by the best German critics as a forgery —being found in one manuscript only, and in no other.

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